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ABSTRACT

Volume III, Number 5 of this newsletter, which is published monthly during the school year and disseminates ideas and suggestions concerning innovations and problem solutions for secondary social sciences, focuses on flexible, individualized social science in the high school. A program, its principles, and suggestions for syllabi are outlined as suggested by the Educational Research Council of America (ERCA) to improve senior high school social science programs. Two basic needs of the program are identified as (1) minicourses or units at varying levels designed for independent and group study and (2) diagnostic tests with which teachers can guide students to appropriate courses of study. A sample diagnostic test for high school students is presented as one method of identifying weaknesses and gaps in knowledge as well as the strengths, aptitudes, and interests of students. (KSM)

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you, too

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FLEXIBLE, INDIVIDUALIZED SOCIAL SCIENCE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

For some time the Educational Research Council of America has been working on the problem of an improved senior high school social science program. The following principles have been adopted.

1. There is a body of social science knowledge to which every student should be thoroughly exposed.

2. This exposure should be complete by the end of ninth grade.

3. Many students will not, however, have fully absorbed this knowledge by the end of ninth grade.

4. High school offerings should be flexible and individualized, designed to suit the needs of each student.

5. Students will therefore be guided to minicourses suited to their needs and aptitudes. Some of these courses will remedy gaps in the student's knowledge. Others will enable the student to pursue studies in which he or she is specially interested either because of aptitude or avocational or vocational aims.

In order to implement a program based on these principles, two tall orders will have to be filled:

1. A considerable number of minicourses or units written at varying intellectual levels must be prepared, and these units must as far as possible be designed for independent or group study; that is, they must not require constant teacher activism and hand-holding.

2. To enable the teacher to guide the student to appropriate courses of study, diagnostic tests must be available. These tests will seek to identify gaps, or weaknesses in the students knowledge, together with his strengths, special aptitudes, and vocational (career) needs.

It will be obvious that the program attempts to salvage the minicourse approach to secondary education, while remedying some of its weaknesses. Those weaknesses are:

1. Dissipation and fragmentation of the student's energies and knowledge.

2. Failure to ensure that the student acquires and retains basic and essential knowledge.

3. Excessive strain on the teacher.

4. Lack of adequate materials and study guides prepared by experts.

A start has been made in planning the units for the program. Pages 48-49 of the ERCA Materials and Services, 1973-1974 brochure offer a list of possible minicourses. A rationale for high school social science has also been drawn up. The revised version was published in you, too, Volume I, Number 5, May 1972. A syllabus of high school social science has also been drafted, redrafted, and redrafted again. It is still unsatisfactory. Copies may be obtained by writing to the director of the social science department. Critical comments will be welcomed.

It seems that two syllabi are needed.

1. A syllabus of basic essential knowledge.

2. A syllabus of more advanced knowledge that will help in the preparation of specialized units such as Economic analysis, Readings from political scientists, or Management and systems analysis.

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When these syllabi are firm, performance objectives based on them will be formulated.

Meanwhile a start has been made on sample diagnostic test items. Some of these items in draft form follow. It will be noted that they involve a variety of approaches. A number of other approaches will also be tried, including audio-visual tests, group tests, essay tests, and programmed tests involving successive logical choices. Obviously the present draft will need much refinement.

Let us have your reactions! Maybe you can try items 1, 7, 8, and 9 with your students. Or you may have some better ideas.

SAMPLES OF DIAGNOSTIC TESTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Note: The objective of the tests is twofold: to identify weaknesses and gaps in knowledge; and to identify strengths, aptitudes, and interests of students.

1. The following list contains technical terms mainly from the disciplines of social science. Below the list are a number of statements. You should select from the list of terms the term (or terms) appropriate for each statement.

absolute
agriculture
anachronism
arbitrary
balance of power
barter
bias
boom
business cycle
capital
chronology
civil disobedience
civilization
Confucian
constitutional
credit
crossroads of civilization
culture
cyclical theory
decadence
deflation
depression
dialetical materialism
diminishing returns
discrimination
environment
environmentalism
exogamy
expenditure
factors of production
foreign trade
genetic factors
good neighbor policy
Gresham's Law
Heartland
heredity
heresy
hydrologic cycle
hydrosphere
idealism
ideologies
inflation
ingroup-outgroup relations
judicial review
labor
latitude
lend-lease
lithosphere
longitude
management
marginal utility
Marxism
meridian
middle ages
Modern Age
money
Monroe Doctrine
Natural Law
neolithic age
obsolete
orthodoxy
outgo
panic
pattern
projection
raw materials
rebellion
recession
religions
retribution
Rimland
sanctions
savings
separation of powers
services
socialist
sociology
subsoil
totalitarian
underdog
utopian
vistas
Will of Heaven

a. If the supply of money increases without a corresponding increase in the supply of goods available, prices will change, and _____ will result.

b. Efficient production depends on the correct allocation of _____, which are _____, _____, _____, and _____.

c. When people postpone consumption they can accumulate _____, or _____.

d. The most primitive form of exchange or trade is _____.

e. The common name for the medium of exchange is _____.

f. A mild decline in business activity and employment is a _____. A severe decline is a _____.

g. Every human society has values, institutions, and mores that its members must learn. We call all these learned things the _____ of the society.

h. Every human being tends to think of his attitude toward others in terms of "we-they." This way of thinking results from _____.

i. People often argue about "nature versus nurture" as conditioning factors in human beings. Other terms for nature are _____ and _____. An alternative term for nurture is _____.

j. When nations form alliances to check a powerful or aggressive nation, we see a _____ policy at work.

k. A government unlimited by law or checks and balances is _____ or _____. If this type of government also tries to control every aspect of the lives of its people, it is _____. The opposite of unlimited government is _____ government.

l. Another term for passive resistance is _____.

m. The _____ of the contemporary world include democratic socialism, communism, nationalism, liberal democracy, and anti-communism.

n. The time zones of the world tend to follow lines of _____.

o. The rock crust of the earth is the _____.

p. Nearly every type of map _____ results in some kind of distortion on large scale maps.

q. Geopoliticians sometimes call the area between the Elbe and eastern Siberia the _____.

r. The opposite of the theory that all values are relative is the theory that some values are _____. The general term for values that are not relative is _____.

s. The period that begins c. 1492 is called the _____.

t. The philosophy and historical philosophy of Marxism is _____.

u. The statement, "Julius Caesar was gunned down in the Capitol," is an example of _____.

v. Chinese historians often explain the collapse of a dynasty as the result of losing the _____.

w. Sumer was the world's first _____.

x. The Inquisition was set up to prevent _____.

y. The principle of American policy that forbids the interference of non-American powers in the New World is the _____.

z. In the case of Marbury v Madison the U.S. Supreme Court first asserted its claim to veto acts of Congress. This veto power is called _____.

2. A series of readings and diagrams, illustrations, etc. These might include: excerpts from: Plutarch's Lives, Gibbon's Decline and Fall, Aristotle's Politics, Confucius' Analects, Henry Adams's History of the U.S., article from Wall Street Journal, decision of the Supreme Court, the Constitution, anthropologist's field report, discussion on penology, pages from an area study, passage from the Bible, Thoreau's Civil Disobedience, Communist Manifesto, and so on. In addition: some graphs (economic, climate, population), statistics, maps of varying complexity, and sets of illustrations. The illustrations could cover many themes: types of landscape, history of sculpture, architecture and painting, costumes, racial types, technology and inventions, scenes from a given culture, etc.

   Each excerpt or graphic will be followed by questions to test comprehension.

   This test should identify strengths, weaknesses, and preferences in the student. It will offer the student with low verbal aptitude a chance to show his understanding of symbols and illustrations.

3. A series of logical problems. Example: statistics showing the GNP in various countries over a twenty-year period—first in current dollars, then in constant dollars. Changes in population in each country would also be shown (so that per capita GNP could be worked out). Questions would test whether students could understand how much economic growth had occurred, how much was real and how much due to inflation, and whether economic growth had kept up with population growth. The concept of developed and developing economies could also be examined, together with the concept of capital accumulation and investment.

   Another example: a fairly simple problem in foreign policy, followed by questions to test understanding of the problem and ability to consider various policy options.

   Another: brief summary of an historical episode, with questions to test sense of chronology, and of cause and effect relationships, and ability to distinguish rational from irrational decisions or judgments.

   Another: three or four documents or accounts of an event. Questions to test comprehension and ability to perceive bias, falsification, intentional omission, exaggeration, etc.

4. Excerpts from political statements—politicians, demagogues, and political scientists. Questions would seek to find whether students could identify main ideological assumptions and value systems.

   Excerpts from religious documents or descriptions of religious beliefs. Questions would attempt to identify ability to recognize basic beliefs such as: monotheism, polytheism, immortality, agnosticism, atheism, reincarnation, deism, a personal deity, revelation, asceticism, scale of moral values, etc., and the probable effects of these beliefs on behavior.

5. A situation involving moral and legal factors will be described. Questions will elucidate students' understanding of issues involved, and general degree of sophistication in judging the situation.

6. A series of cartoons with political or social implications. Questions will test ability to perceive the aim of the cartoonist, his principles or prejudices, his propagandist aim, and so on.

7. A world map, unlabeled, with certain areas of recent and contemporary importance shaded and numbered.

   1. (The Middle East)
   2. (Southeast Asia)
   3. (Sino-Soviet border)
   4. (Cuba)
   5. (Eastern Europe)

   Questions will require identification of each area and comments on the significance of the area in terms of world political and economic problems and American foreign and defense policies.

8. A <u>basic factual</u> knowledge test.

   a. On an outline map of Africa and Eurasia label China, Japan, India, USSR, Indonesia, Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Norway, Poland, West Germany, Ireland, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Black Sea, Mediterranean, Nile River, Danube River, Volga River, Yangtze Kiang, Himalayas, Urals, Alps, Sahara, Gobi Desert.

   b. On an outline map of the Americas label Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, Florida, California, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Alaska, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Mississippi River, Missouri River, St. Lawrence River, Amazon River, River Plate (Rio de la Plata), Andes, Rockies, Appalachians, Great Plains, Cape Horn, Isthmus of Panama.

   c. Name the capital cities of the People's Republic of China, Australia, Egypt, Israel, the Soviet Union, Canada, France, Romania, North Vietnam.

d. Put these events in their chronological order:

Cortés's conquest of Mexico
Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
Russian Revolution
Peloponnesian War
Magna Carta
First settlement at Jamestown
American Revolution
French Revolution
American Civil War
Assassination of President Kennedy

e. What is the historical importance of the following persons?

Mao Tse-tung
Adolf Hitler
Moses
Socrates
Gautama, the Buddha
Frederick Douglass
Magellan
Nikita Khrushchev

f. Who drafted the Declaration of Independence? On what date was it signed? On what day of the year do we celebrate its signing?

g. What do we mean by:

(i) a free market, laissez-faire economy,
(ii) a mixed economy,
(iii) a command or totalitarian economy.

Name two countries with mixed economies and two with totalitarian economies.

h. What season is it in Australia when it is winter in the United States? What causes this phenomenon?

i. In discussing relations between cultures or ethnic groups the following terms are often used. What does each mean?

genocide
segregation
acculturation
assimilation
cultural pluralism
culture shock
multiethnicity

j. What is the separation of powers? What are the powers that are separated? Why is the separation of powers thought to be a highly desirable device?

k. What rights or freedoms are listed in the First Amendment to the Constitution (Article I of the Bill of Rights)?

l. What is meant (in law and economics) by "limited liability"? What is the connection between limited liability and business corporations? What are stocks and shares? What is the dividend paid by corporations? What is the connection between dividends and profit and loss? What is the difference between dividend and interest?

m. What was the Reformation? What has the Reformation to do with the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Lutheran Church, and many Protestant churches?

9. Test of ability to do simple research. The student has the run of a library with the following reference books:

current World Almanac
current Associated Press Almanac
current American Almanac: The U.S. Book of Facts, Statistics and Information
large dictionary
Encyclopaedia Britannica
Langer, Encyclopedia of World History
Morris, Encyclopedia of American History
large atlas
historical atlas
Dictionary of American Biography
Commager, Documents of American History
Bartlett's Quotations

Using whatever resources you like, find the answers to these questions. You have two hours.

a. What is the per capita GNP of Ghana?
b. What is the approximate latitude and longitude of Vladivostok?
c. On what date did Neil Armstrong land on the moon?
d. What is a Mediterranean type climate?
e. What climate type is found in the Amazon basin?
f. Where and in what direction does the Gulf Stream flow?
g. What is the population of the three largest cities of the United States?
h. What were the dates of:

The Stamp Act
Murder of Thomas Becket
Battle of Thermopylae
Ivan the Terrible
Assassination of Julius Caesar
Brown v. Board of Education
Elizabeth I of England
Gustavus Adolphus
Battle of Leyte Gulf
Confucius (approximate)
Missouri Compromise
Opium War

Spanish Civil War
Death of Lenin
Ming dynasty
Neolithic (agricultural) revolution (approximate)
Aztec empire
Iroquois League (the "five nations")

i. Where is the list of Congress's enumerated powers? (Give article and section.)

j. What were the "four freedoms" stipulated by Franklin D. Roosevelt?

k. What was the amount of the national budget of the United States in 1973 (or later year)?

l. What is meant by:

anthropomorphic
pocket veto
turnover tax
endogamous
humanist
Shiah Muslim
metempsychosis

m. Name two books by each of the following:

Sigmund Freud
Fyodor Dostoevsky
Francis Parkman
St. Augustine
Aristotle
Sinclair Lewis

n. What was the crime rate of the United States in 1971 (or later year)?

o. What was the popular vote for presidential candidates in 1968? What percentage did each candidate receive? How many votes in the electoral college did each have?

p. How many immigrants arrived in the United States between 1901 and 1910?

q. What is the consumer price index? What was it for all items in the United States in 1960? In 1970?

r. What is meant by GNP (gross national product)? What was the GNP of the United States in 1950, 1960, 1970, and (latest available date)? Give the answer first in <u>current</u> dollars, then in <u>constant</u> or adjusted dollars. Indicate the <u>base year</u> used for constant dollars.

s. What does the acronym SALT stand for? What were the main terms of SALT signed by the USA and USSR in 1972?